

# The Ugly Angel's *Reunion Newsletter*

Vol. 1 August 1996

The smoke and dust has settled in LZ Vegas, our casualties have been evacuated, and we have finally put our lost Angels to rest. Time now to prepare the After Action Report.

Based on the feedback I have gotten, the mission can only be viewed as a huge success. As best I can remember ( who said we were organized or sober? ), **sixty-eight** Ugly Angels landed in LZ Vegas. Their names are on the reverse ( corrections welcomed ). From the amount of handshaking, backslapping, hugging, laughing and scratching going on, everyone seemed to be having a good time. The Ready Room was once again the center of operations. Angels who were veterans of WWII, Korea, and Vietnam were there. Veterans of Archie's Angels were there. Half of the class of 1966-67 ( a vintage year ) was there. One Angel still on active duty was there. And a whole lot of really old looking guys were there. In contrast, wasn't it great to see former Skippers Jim Aldworth, Nick Kapetan, and Dick Cline looking so young. Movies, videos and slides galore were shown - and more war stories and lies told than can be counted.

What can I say about the Memorial Luncheon? It was our best attended event. We were honored to have Mike Carley's son, Mike Jr., and his brother, Dick, with us. And we finally got the chance to express what all of us have been holding in our hearts for thirty years. For some of us, a sad yet intensely proud chapter of our lives is finally closed. Judging from your reaction, most of you feel the same way. We have had so many requests for the Grace and Eulogy that they are included as an insert to this edition.

The Friday night Happy Hour and Saturday night Pool Party were both exciting affairs - with the excellent food the highlight of these events. We watched in amused fascination as both "Duke" and "Elvis" died again - big time - right before our eyes. And, surprisingly, no one got thrown into the pool. Until I heard about the Ugly Angel on-stage "animal act" during the Rock & Roll show ( who were those guys who said "hello" to MAG-16 ? ), I thought we were finally showing signs of maturing. Ain't it great?

*Lessons Learned: "A hole to small for one man  
will accommodate half a hooch during incoming"*

A courtesy copy of the newsletter, *Cherry Deuce*, sent to me contains the headline, "VMO-2 Steals Show in Las Vegas". Considering they had 66 guys ( counting a lost dog named Lucky? ) show up compared to our 68, I wonder what show they're talking about? On the other hand, maybe they were judging by the amount of bullshit they piled up during the reunion.

In that connection, those of you who made the Sunday night dinner and show will recall that the winner of the best Ready Room competition was suspiciously not announced. The bad news is that we only tied for first place with ( you guessed it ) VMO-2. While I can't prove the fix was in, it does appear that money talks and they spent lots of it. Anyway, ours had the grotty feel and smell of Ky Ha and Phu Bai - and it won us a **free** tent at Pensacola in 98. What was most impressive, though, is that our Ready Room took shape without any huge committee, lengthy meetings, financial cost, or other mickey mouse. The good news is that the auction of the Mike Leahy painting did so well that our pipe and drape in Las Vegas cost us zilch.

I am proud to report that the Mayday Fund to which many of you so generously contributed functioned as designed. Because of it, we were able to have two Angels with us for all events who otherwise would not have been able to attend. The fund had a surplus of \$87.00 which I am arbitrarily transferring to the newsletter fund ( if you don't agree, write ). You have made the concept of "taking care of our own" a living, breathing reality. It is not without reason that we are intensely proud to be Ugly Angels.

Belated thanks to Dick Carley, Oramel Hall, and "Twinkle Toes" Jones ( formerly known as Doc before his Sunday night performance ) for their contributions to the newsletter fund.

While almost everything went as planned, they were a few foul ups. Foremost among them was the soft goods situation for which I accept responsibility. Because I misunderstood Frenchy, who I thought was going to ship the prepaid articles before the reunion and then sell the preordered articles in Las Vegas, we ended up having to set up shop ourselves. Thanks to my wife, Joanne, Anne Sohm, and Ailene Cascio we were able to deliver all the soft goods Frenchy provided. Nevertheless, I know some of you didn't get what you wanted, or ordered, or perhaps paid for. If that's the case, please contact Frenchy personally. His name, rank, and serial number are: Norm Lafontaine, 57 Long Plain Rd. Mattapoisett, MA 02739. Tel. (508) 758-2314. Do not contact me - I am now out of the soft goods business forever!

Another problem concerns the Memorial Luncheon. Because of the numerous last minute shows and general confusion, Gunny Sachs came up short the price of six meals ( \$175.00 ) when he settled with Bally's. He and I ( who will have to eat the cost ) would appreciate it if those of you who forgot to pay would send Gunny a check. The cost: \$25.00/meal. His address: P.O. Box 1360, Norwich, VT 05055.

**More Lessons Learned:**  
*"Anything you do can get you shot - even nothing"*

Marc Sohm reports that former Ugly Angel, Perry Mann, will make copies of the USMC recruiting film, *The Ugly Angels*, for anyone one who wants one. If you're interested write Perry at 3769 Lower Fayetteville Rd., Newnan, GA 30265

Thanks to those of you who wrote me after the reunion - your kind words are deeply appreciated. A final thanks to all of you helped organize our mini-reunion, made phone calls and sent letters, set up the ready room, made banners, brought memorabilia to display, contributed money, and attended. A "love you man" to Roger Herman and his crew for a fantastic idea and a great reunion! As the FWPs ( fixed wing pukers ) say - "Sierra Hotel".

With the publishing of this newsletter, seven editions totaling 525 copies plus 275 individual letters will have been printed and mailed in connection with organizing our reunion. Total cost for postage and materials to date is estimated ( I may have lost a receipt or two ) at \$441.57. You have generously contributed \$310.64. ( including \$87.00 transferred from the Mayday Fund ) of the total. The rest is on me.

**Awarded the Las Vegas Campaign Medal**

( corrections welcomed )

Jim/Kitty Aldworth	Greg/Nancy Armstrong	Steve Attell	Lew/Jean Barnes
Jack/Rita Barry	Bo/Opal Beumer	Pat/Willa Bray	Alan/Janet
Bloomer <sup>1</sup>	Jim Butler & 2dLt. Butler	Allan Cain	Mike Carley Jr.
Ben/Ailene Cascio	Ed Chenkus	Chris Christensen	Dick/Koochie Cline
Roger Cook	Ed/Shirley Creamer	Norm Derylak	Bill/Carol Duffy
Bob Feeney	Sandy Gideonse	Dave Golding	Butch Gorman
Oramel/Sharon Hall	Garret Hatcher	Ron Hatton	Ron Heald
Tom/Joanne Hewes	Don Hirsch	Bart/Deborah Jealous	Doc Jones
Ralph Jones	Nick Kapetan	Denny Kawalek	Mike Kennett
Pete King	Lin La Viano	D. J. Leighton	Ken/Raeanne Logue
John Longdin	Mike Melin	Dave/Amelia Moore	Bob O'Neil
Burt/Glenda Palmer	Hugh Rothweiler	Gunny/Marlene Sachs	Tom Schaney
Mike Severson	John/Mary Ann Sigman	Marc/Anne Sohm	Ron Sorenson
Willie/Esta Sproule	Lou Stefan	Al Thomas	Tom/Anita Thurber
Phil/Judy Turner	Charlie Upshaw	Denny/Carolynn Van Liew	Jim Villarreal
Deak/Marsha Warner	Tom Warning	Muddy/Ruth Waters	Carl/Anne Wheeler
Bill/Jan Wilkison	Bill Willey	Wimpy Wimpler	Mike Zacker

<sup>1</sup>and Lisa

**Last Minute Aborts**  
( with regrets )

Carl Cartwright  
Ron Harkless  
Ed Southworth

Ron Fix  
Ed Hunneyman

Jim Gordon  
Dave Jones

Bill Green  
Bill Kelly

***Next edition of the Newsletter, Winter 1996 - provided you guys send me news to put in it!***

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Grace for the Memorial Luncheon

Good afternoon and welcome, everyone. It's appropriate to begin this assembly by expressing thanks. By expressing thanks to Creation Six for making it possible for us to convene here today. We are the Ugly Angels, and we take great pride in the title.

We give thanks for the opportunity to gather once again in good fellowship to remember our brothers. We give thanks for the fortune of surviving the ugly years of combat, and for the privilege of serving as angel to the wounded grunts we evacuated.

And we give thanks for knowing the ugly truth of war. The truth that only warriors can know, a truth we dare speak only in the presence of each other. War is exhilarating. Amidst all its horrors, war brings out the finest qualities of mankind: courage in the face of terror, dedication to a cause, cooperation and teamwork, self-sacrifice, and devotion to one's peers.

We give thanks that we can recall the experience as Ugly Angels. Ugly by situation, Angels by aspiration, and always faithful to the memory of our companions now absent.

Eulogy to our Lost Angels

We gather here today, some twenty-one years after the Vietnam war's sad conclusion, to pay homage to all the Ugly Angels who lost their lives in that conflict. Some of you will perhaps feel this as an occasion for sadness, or pain, or perhaps even bitterness. It should be none of these because I am confident that our lost Angels would not want us to feel any of those emotions. Rather, we join together this afternoon simply to celebrate their memory. Yes, I said celebrate - celebrate in the sense of a traditional wake delayed for nearly thirty years. Before we continue then, let me take a moment to toll their names:

Cpl. Philip Russell Anderson  
Denver Dewey Colburn Jr.

Capt. Donnie Len Darrow  
Cpl. Lantie Lawrence Harris Jr.  
2d Lt. Anthony Edward Kisucky  
1st Lt. Richard Arthur Miller

Cpl. James Harvey Post Jr.

Cpl. George Allison Bird III  
Maj. Robert Michael Cramer

Cpl. Thomas Evan Douglas  
LCpl. William Brian Hays  
LCpl. Lawrence W. Kleinhans  
Cpl. John Howard Mooney Jr.

1st Lt. Francis Edward Visconti

1st Lt. Michael John Carley  
Capt. Jeffrey Charles Crouse

Cpl. William E. Franklin Jr.  
1st Lt. Christopher Larry Houck  
LCpl. Kenneth R. McBeth  
Cpl. Victor John Pirker

If we have been faithful to the tradition of a wake, our lost Angels have been quietly in our thoughts as we were eating lunch and talking to one another. And perhaps as we thought of them, we could visualize their young faces, hear their voices, and remember them - and ourselves - as we were back in the sixties.

We remember them at Ky Ha or Phu Bai straggling out of the hooches or barracks to greet the rising sun of the Vietnamese day, and in the messhall flicking away the countless roaches as we quickly breakfasted. We remember them sweating out seemingly endless days in the hanger, shop, and ready room, and later perhaps drinking a lukewarm beer at the club. Certainly we remember them in the air where each of us used up eight of our nine lives doing Troop and Recon inserts, day and night Medevacs, Admin runs, Resupplies, C & Cs, Emergency extracts, and sometimes SOG and Delta missions.

We remember the roar of the engine, the whine of the transmission, the pounding of the "M-60s, and a largely unseen enemy. We remember the sweltering heat and humidity, the unlighted landing zones, the crack of passing rounds, and the fear which gripped us all. We remember them, who were so much a part of our Vietnam experience, as we all were back then. We celebrate them in this way because we can bestow upon them no higher honor than simply to remember them.

We Marines like to think of ourselves, as the Corps taught us all those years ago at Parris Island, San Diego, and Quantico, as a band of brothers. It was, I believe, Commandant General John A. Lejuene, who first applied Shakespeare's words from *King Henry the Fifth* to our Corps of a few good men. The quotation he drew it from refers to the moments just before the battle of Agincourt where the King says to his Marines: "... we in it shall be remembered, - We few, we happy few, we band of brothers: For he today that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother...."

It is this central thought, the idea that "... he today that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother...." that bonds us Ugly Angels together as tightly as though we were sons of the same father. It is an unbreakable bond forged in the furnace of combat which makes us a family in the noblest sense of that word. And like all large families which experience tragedy, today we put aside our grudges, our politics, and our differences to remember. To remember, and to honor, and to love our departed brothers. But, as much as we would like to bring them back, that is not within our earthly powers: their resurrection is reserved unto a higher authority. Let us not mourn them then, but honor their sacrifice by our presence here - by taking care of our own as it were - through the simple act of remembrance.

It should not matter then to "the band of brothers," the Ugly and now aging Angels assembled here, whether other families remember them, or even whether a divided nation remembers them, so long as our family remembers these men with whom we shared the fear and the fire. Let us then solemnly pledge that so long as one of us survives, the names, the faces, and the deeds of our lost brothers shall not die. So that we may insure by respectful remembrance, as Shakespeare might have said, that he who yesterday shed his blood with me shall ever my brother be.

Semper Fidelis.